AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 1 of page 37 of the specification with the following:

Next, the process 2200 defines (at 2210) a set N of possible node configurations. When the partitioning grid defines Y (*e.g.*, four, nine, sixteen, twenty, etc.) sub-regions, set N includes 2^Y node configurations. After defining the set N of possible node configurations, the process 2200 ~~select~~ <u>selects</u> (at 2215) one of the possible node configurations N_T from this set.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 11 of page 64 of the specification with the following:

At 3615, the process also computes the cost of each MCT <u>identified</u> ~~identifies~~ at 3615. In some embodiments, the process computes each MCT's cost by (1) assigning costs to the Manhattan and diagonal paths that <u>connect</u> ~~connects~~ the adjacent slots of the partitioning grid, (2) identifying the paths used by the MCT, and (3) summing up the path costs. A node configuration that has less than two nodes does not have a MCT, and accordingly its MCT cost is zero.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 4 of page 66 of the specification with the following:

On the other hand, if the process determines (at 3730) that at least one of the nodes ~~node~~ identified at 3725 is not part of the open node configuration, the process determines whether it has examined all <u>of</u> the MCT's for the combined node configuration. If not, the process returns to 3720 to select another MCT. Otherwise, the process transitions to 3745. At 3745, the process determines whether it has examined all <u>of</u> the candidate <u>sets</u> ~~set~~ of connection nodes. If not, the process transitions back to 3710 to select and examine another candidate set. Otherwise, the process ends.